A GRAINE OF MVSTERD-SEEDE:

Or,

THE LEAST MEASVRE OF GRACE, that is or can be effectuall to saluation.

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MAGD. COLL. CANTAB.

To the Right Honourable and vertuous *Lady the Ladie* Margaret, Counteſſe of Cumberland, Grace and Peace.

RIght Honourable, the kingdome of heauen, of which the ſcripture ſpeaketh ſo oft, is properly a certaine ſtate or condition, whereby we ſtand in the fauour and loue of God, in and by Chriſt. And this kingdome is cõpared to a Graine of Muſterd ſeede, to teach vs that a man is euen at that inſtant already entred into the kingdome of heauen, when the Lord that good husbandman hath caſt but ſome little portion of faith or repentance into the ground of the heart; yea, though it be but

as one Graine of Musterd-seed. Of this little Graine I haue penned this Treatise, in quantity answerable thereto: and I now present the same to your Ladiship, not to supplie your want, (for I hope you are stored with many Graines of this kinde) but to performe some duty on my part. Hoping therefore that your Ladiship will reade and accept the same, I take my leaue, commending you to the blessing and protection of the Almightie.

Your Honours
to command,

W. Perkins.

A GRAINE OF MUSTERD-SEEDE, OR, the leaſt meaſure of *grace, that is, or can be* effectuall to Salvation.

IT is a very neceſſary point to be knowne, *What is the leaſt meaſure of grace that can befall the true childe of God, leſſer then which, there is no grace effectuall to ſaluation.* For firſt of all, the right vnderſtanding of this point, is the very foundation of true cõfort vnto all troubled and touched cõſciences. Secondly, it is a notable meanes to

ſtirre vp thankefulneſſe in them that haue any grace at all; when they ſhall in examination of themſelues conſider, that they haue receiued of God the leaſt meaſure of grace, or more. Thirdly, it will be an inducement, and a ſpurre vnto many careleſſe and vnrepentant perſons, to embrace the Goſpel, and to beginne repentance for their ſinnes; when they ſhall perceiue, and that by the word of God, that God accepts the very ſeeds and rudiments of faith and repentance at the firſt, though they be but in meaſure as a Graine of Muſterd-ſeed. Now then for opening and clearing of this point: I will ſet downe fiue ſeuerall concluſions, in

ſuch

ſuch order as one ſhall confirme and explane the other, and one depend vpon the other.

I. Concluſion.

A man that doth but begynne to bee conuerted, is euen at that inſtant, the very child of God, though inwardly hee be more carnall then ſpirituall.

The Expoſition.

IN a man there muſt be cõſidered three things, the ſubſtance of the body and ſoule, whereof man is ſaid to conſiſt; the faculties placed in the ſoule & exerciſed in the body, as vnderſtanding, will, affections: the in-

tegrity and purity of the faculties, whereby they are coformable to the will of God, and beare his Image. And ſince the fall of *Adam*, man is not depriued of his ſubſtance or of the powers and faculties of his ſoule, but onely of the third, which is the puritie, or integritie of nature. And therfore the conuerſion of a ſinner, whereof the concluſion ſpeaketh, is not the change of the ſubſtance of man, or of the faculties of the ſoule: but a renewing and reſtoring of that puritie and holineſſe which was loſt by mans fall, with the aboliſhment of that naturall corruption that is in all the powers of the ſoule, This is the worke of God, and of God

alone, and that on this manner. First of all, when it pleaseth God to worke a change in any, he doth it not first in one part, then afterward in another, as hee that repaires a decaied house by peecemeale: but the worke, both for the beginning, continuance, and accomplishment, is in the whole man, and euery part at once, specially in the minde, conscience, will, and affections: as on the cõtrary, whẽ *Adam* lost the image of God, he lost it in euery part. Secondly, the conuersion of a sinner is not wrought all at one instant, but in continuance of time: & that by certaine measures and degrees. And a man is then in the first degree of his conuersion when

when the holy Ghoſt by the meanes of the word, inſpires him with ſome ſpirituall motions, & begins to regenerate and renew the inward powers of his ſoule. And he may in this caſe very fitly be compared to the night in the firſt dawning of the day, in which though the darkenes remaine and be more in quãtity then the light, yet the ſun hath alreadie caſt ſome beams of light into the aire, whereupon we tearme it the breaking of the day. Now then, the very point which I teach, is, that a man at this inſtant, and in this very ſtate, (God as yet hauing but layd certen beginnings of true cõuerſion in his heart) is the very child of God, and that not only

only in the eternall purpose of God (as all the elect are) but indeed by actuall adoption: and this is plain by a manifest reason: There be foure speciall workes of grace in euery child of God: his vnion with Christ, his adoption, iustification, and conuersion: & these foure are wrought all at one instant, so as for order of time, neither goes before nor after other: and yet in regard of order of nature, vnion with Christ, Iustification, and adoption, goe before the inward conuersion of a sinner, it being the fruite and effect of all. Vpon this it followeth necessarily, that a sinner in the very first act of his conuersion, is iustified, adopted, and incorporated into

into the myſticall bodie of Chriſt. In the Parable of the prodigall ſonne, the father with ioy receiues his wicked child; but when? ſurely when he ſaw him comming afarre off, and when as yet he had made no confeſſion or humiliation to his father, but onely had conceiued with himſelfe a purpoſe to returne and to ſay, Father I haue ſinned againſt heauen and againſt thee, &c. And *Paul* ſaith of many of the Corinthians, that he could not ſpeake vnto them as ſpirituall men, but as carnall, euē babes in Chriſt, 1. *Cor.* 3. 1. When *Dauid* reprooued by *Nathan* did but begin to repent and to ſay, *I haue ſinned*, preſently *Nathan* the Prophet of the Lord

Lord said, *The Lord hath taken away thy sin.* Of this thing *Dauid* seemes to speake in the 32. Psal. v. 5. *I said* [that is, I purposed & thought with my selfe] I *will confesse against my selfe mine vnrighteousnesse, and thou forgauest mine iniquities.* Vpon these words *Augustine* saith, *Marke, he doth not confesse, but promiseth to confesse, and God forgiueth him.* Againe, *There be* (saith he) *three syllables,* peccaui, *I haue sinned: and from these three syllables the flame of a sacrifice did ascend into heauen before God.* Chrysostome saith, *Say thou hast sinned: and thou hast loosed thy sinne.* And Ambrose saith: *If he said, I will confesse, and obtained pardon before hee confessed, how much more when*

he had confessed, saying, I know mine iniquitie, was his sinne pardoned? Gregorie on this Psal. saith, *Marke how speedily pardon comes, and how great is the commendation of Gods mercie, in that pardon comes together with the desire of confession, and remission comes to the heart, before confession breake foorth in speech.*

II. Conclusion.

The first materiall beginnings of the conuersion of a sinner, or the smallest measure of renewing grace, haue the promises of this life, and the life to come.

The Exposition.

THe beginnings of conuersion must be distinguished: some are beginnings of

of preparation, ſome beginnings of compoſition. Beginnings of preparation are ſuch as bring vnder, tame, & ſubdue the ſtubbernes of mans nature: without making any change at all: of this ſort are the accuſations of the conſcience by the miniſterie of the law, feares and terrours ariſing thence, compunction of heart, which is the apprehenſion of Gods anger againſt ſinne. Nowe theſe and the like, I exclude in the concluſiō; for though they goe before to prepare a ſinner to his conuerſion following, yet are they no graces of God, but fruits both of the law, being the miniſtery of death, as alſo of an accuſing conſcience. Beginnings of compoſition

sition I tearme all those in-
ward motions and inclina-
ons of Gods Spirit, that fol-
low after the worke of the
law vpon the conscience, and
rise vpon the meditation of
the Gospell, that promiseth
righteousnes and life euerla-
sting by Christ: out of which
motions the conuersion of a
sinner ariseth, and of which it
consisteth: what these are, it
shall afterward appeare. A-
gaine, grace must be distin-
guished: it is two-fold; restrai-
ning grace, or renuing grace.
Restraining grace, I tearme
certaine common gifts of
God, seruing onely to order
and frame the outward con-
uersation of men to the Law
of God, or seruing to bereaue
men of excuse in the day of
iudge-

udgment. By this kind of race, heathen men haue bin berall, iust, sober, valiant, & hercifull. By it men liuing in he Church of God, haue eene inlightned, and ha- ing tasted of the good word f God, haue reioyced there- n, and for a time outwardly onformed themselues ther- o. Renewing grace is not ommon to al men, but pro- er to the elect, & it is a gift f Gods spirit, whereby the corruption of a sinner is not nly restrained, but also mor- ified, and the decaied image f God restored in righte- usnes & true holines. Now hen the conclusiō must on- y be vnderstood of the se- cond, and not of the first: for though a man haue neuer so much

much of this restraining grace, yet vnlesse he haue the spirit of Christ to create faith in the heart, and to sanctifie him, he is as farre from saluation as another. Thus then the sense and meaning of the conclusion is, that the verie least measure of sauing grace and the verie beginning or seedes of regeneration doe declare, and after a sort giue title to men, of all the mercifull promises of God, whether they concern this life or the life to come: & are therefore approoued of God, if they be in truth; & accepted as greater measures of grace. That which our Sauiour Christ saith of the worke of miracles, Math. 17.20. *If ye haue faith as a graine of Mu-*

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terd-seede, ye shall say vnto this mountaine, remoone hence to yonder place, and it shall remoone, must by the law of equall proportion be applied to sauing faith, repentance, the feare of God, and all other graces; if they be truly wrought in the heart, though they be but as smal as one little graine of Musterd-seede, they shall be sufficiently effectuall to bring forth good workes, for which they are ordained. The prophet *Esay* 42.3, saith, that Christ *shall not quench the smoking flaxe, nor breake the bruised reede.* Let the comparison be marked: fire in flaxe must bee both little and weake in quantitie as a sparke or twain, that cannot cause a flame, but only

ly

ly a ſmoke, ſpecially in a mat-
ter ſo eaſie to burne. Here the
is ſignified, that the gifts and
graces of Gods ſpirit, that are
both for meaſure & ſtrength
as a ſparke or twaine of fire,
ſhal not be neglected, but ra-
ther accepted and cheriſhed
by Chriſt. When our Saui-
our Chriſt heard the young
man make a confeſſion of a
practiſe but of outward and
ciuill righteouſneſſe, *he looked*
vpon him and loued him: Mark.
10, 21. and when he heard the
Scribe to ſpeake diſcreet-
ly but one good ſpeech, that
to loue god with al the heart
is aboue all ſacrifices, he ſaid
vnto him, *That he was not far*
from the kingdome of heauen.
Therfore no dout, hee will
loue with a more ſpeciall

loue

ue, and accept as the good
biects of his kingdome,
hose that haue receiued a
rther mercie of God, to be
orne anew of water and the
pirit.

III. Conclusion.

A constant and earnest desire to be reconciled to God, to beleeue, and to repent, if it bee in a touched heart, is in acceptation with God, as reconciliation, faith, repentance it selfe.

The Exposition.

LVst or desire is two-fold,
naturall, & supernaturall.
atural is that whose begin-
ings & obiect is in nature,
that

that is, which ariſeth of th
naturall will of man, and a
fecteth ſuch things as a
thought to bee good acco
ding to the light of natur
And this kind of deſire hat
his degrees, yet ſo as they a
all limited within the com
paſſe of nature. Some deſi
riches, honours, pleaſure
ſome learning & knowled
becauſe it is the light & pe
fection of the minde: ſom
go further & ſeeke after th
vertues of iuſtice, tẽperanc
liberality, &c. and thus man
heathen men haue excelle
Some againe deſire true ha
pineſſe, as *Balaam* did, wh
wiſhed to die the death of t
righteous: becauſe it is th
propertie of nature to ſe
the preſeruation of it ſe

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But here nature staies it selfe: for where the mind reueales not, the will affects not. Supernaturall desires, are such as both for their beginning and obiect, are aboue nature. For their beginning is from the holy Ghost; and the obiect or matter about which they are cõuersant, are things diuine and spirituall which concerne the kingdome of heauen: and of this kinde are the desires of which I speake in this place. Againe, that we may not be deceiued in our desires, but may the better discerne thẽ from flittering and fleeting motions, I adde three restraints. First of all, the desire of reconciliation, the desire to beleeue, or the desire to repent, &c. must be

constant and haue continu-
ance, otherwise it may iustly
be suspected. Secodly, it must
be earnest & serious, though
not alwaies, yet at sometimes
that we may be able to say
with *Dauid*, My soule desi-
reth after thee O Lord, as the
thirsty land: and, As the Hart
braieth after the riuers of wa-
ter, so panteth my soule after
thee O God, my soule thir-
steth for God, euen the li-
uing God. Thirdly, it must
be in a touched heart; for
when a man is touched in
conscience, the heart is cast
downe, and (as much as it
can) it withdrawes it selfe from
God. For this cause, if there
there be any spirituall mo-
ons whereby the heart is lift
vp vnto God, they are with
out

but doubt from the Spirit of God. Thus the I auouch, that the desire of reconciliation with God in Christ, is reconciliation it selfe: the desire to beleeue, is faith indeed: & the desire to repent, repentance it selfe. But marke how. A desire to be recociled, is not recociliation in nature (for the desire is one thing, & reconciliation is another) but in Gods acceptation: for if wee being touched throughly for our sinnes, do desire to haue them pardoned, and to be at one with God, God accepts vs as reconciled. Againe, desire to beleeue, it is not faith in nature, but onely in Gods acceptation, God accepting the will for the deede. That this doctrine is the will and

word of God, it appeares by these reasons. First of all, God hath annexed a promise of blessednesse, and of life euerlasting, to the desire of grace, Math. 5. *Blessed are they which hunger and thirst after righteousnesse, for they shal be satisfied.* Ioh. 7. 38. *If any man thirst, let him come to me, and drinke.* Reuel. 21. *I will giue vnto him which is a thirst, of the well of the water of life freely.* Now what is this to thirst? properly it is, when we are in a drought or drinesse, and want drinke to refresh vs, and desire it. And therefore by all resemblance, they are said to thirst after righteousnesse, that want it, and would faine haue it. And they thirst after Christ, that feele themselues out of Christ,

and

and desire, yea long after the blood of Christ, that they might bee refreshed with it in their consciences. Here then we see, that the desire of mercy, in the want of mercy, is the obtaining of mercie; and the desire to beleeue in the want of faith, is faith. Marke then: though as yet thou want firme and liuely grace, yet art thou not altogether voide of grace, if thou canst vnfainedly desire it, thy desire is the seede, conception, or bud of that which thou wantest. Now is the spring time of the ingrafted word, or the immortall seede cast into the furrowes of thy heart: waite but a while, vsing the good meanes to this end appointed, and thou shalt see

the leaues, blossomes & fruit will shortly follow after. Secõdly, the desire of any good thing is accepted of God, as the liuely inuocation of his holy name, Psal. 10. *God heareth the desire of the poore.* Psal. 145. *Hee will fulfill the desire of them that feare him.* When *Moses* said nothing, but onely desired in heart the helpe and protection of God at the red sea, the Lord said vnto him, Why criest thou vnto me? Exod. 14. 15. And when we know not to pray as wee ought, *Paul* saith, that the spirit maketh request by the inward groanes of the heart, Rom. 8. 26. Hence I gather, that whẽ a man in his weakenesse praies with sighes and groanes, for the gift of a liue-

ly faith, the want whereof he finds in himselfe, his very praier on this manner made, is as truly in acceptatiō with God, as a prayer made in a liuely faith. And here it is further to be cōsidered, that *Paul* calles these *groanes vnspeakeable*, and why? Of most interpreters they are thought to be vnspeakable by reason of their greatnesse, and this I will not denie: it seemes neuertheless that they are so tearmed by reason of their weakenesse, for they are commonly small, weake, and confused in the hearts of Gods children when they are distressed: and the words following seeme to import thus much: for when it had bin said that Gods Spirit in

vs makes requeſt with grons not to be vttered: ſome man might haply reply, & ſay, If we cannot diſcerne and vtter theſe grones in our ſelues, what are we the better? *Paul* addes therfore, that althogh we know not, yet God a ſeatcher of all things hidden in the heart, knowes the minde and meaning of the ſpirit. And thus the words yet further affoord a cõfortable inſtruction to the children of God, namely, that being in diſtreſſe, whether in life or death, if by grace we can but ſigh, or ſob vnto God, thogh it be weake and feeble, like the faint pulſe in the time of death; we, or the Spirit of God in vs, do indeede make requeſt vnto god that ſhalbe

heard,

heard, yea, (as the words are) wee doe more then make requeſt: and though we do not alwaies ſee what Gods Spirit makes vs to ſigh after, yet God doth. To the teſtimony of Scripture, I adde the teſtimonies of godly and learned men, not to prooue the doctrine in hand; but to ſhew a conſent, and to prooue thus much, that the thing which I auouch, is no priuate phantaſie of any man. *Eaſily* (ſaith Ambroſe of God) *is he reconciled,*[b] *if he be inſtantly intreated.* Auguſtine ſaith, *Let thy deſire be before him, and thy father which ſeeth in ſecret ſhall reward thee openly: for thy deſire is thy praier, and if thy deſire be continuall, thy praier is continuall.* Hee addes further in

Lib. 7 in Luc. 66.
[b] Si impenſe roetur.
On Pſa. 36.

the ſame place, that *the deſire is a continuall voice, and the cry of the heart, and the inward invocation of God, which may bee made without intermiſſion.* Againe. *To deſire the helpe of grace is the beginning of grace.* Againe: [b] *The whole life of a good Chriſtian, is an holy will and deſire. And that which thou deſireſt, thou ſeeſt not: but by deſiring, art (as it were) inlarged and made capable, that when it ſhall come which thou ſhalt ſee, thou mayſt be filled.* Baſil ſaith, *Onely thou muſt will, and God will come of his owne accord.* [a] Bernard ſaith; *What, is not deſire a voice? Yea a very ſtrong voice. God heareth the deſire of the poore; and a continuall deſire, though wee ſpeake nothing, is a voice continued*

Expoſit. Epiſt Iohn. tract 4. cap. 3.

Hom. of humilitie.

[b] Sup. cant. Ser. 48.

[a] Luther saith, *Christ is then truly omnipotent, and then truly reignes in vs, when wee are so weake, thot wee can scarce giue any grone.* For *Paul* saith, that one such groane is a strong crie in the eares of God, filling both heauen and earth. [a] Tom. 4. pa. 124.

[b] Againe, *Very fewe know, how weake and small faith and hope is, vnder the crosse, and in temptation. For it appeares, then to be as smoaking flaxe, which a good blast of winde would presently put out: but such as beleeue in these combats and terrours, against hope, vnder hope, that is, opposing themselues by faith in the promise of Christ, against the feeling of sinne, and the wrath of God, doe finde afterward that this little sparke of faith (as it appeares to reason* [b] Ib. fol. 156

which

which hardly perceiueth it) is peraduenture as the whole element of fire which filleth all heauen, and swalloweth vp all terrours and sinnes. * Againe, The more wee finde our vnworthinesse, and the lesse wee finde the promise to belong vnto vs, the more must wee desire them, beeing assured that this desire doth greatly please God, who desireth and willeth that his grace should be earnestly desired. This doeth faith, which iudgeth it a precious thing, and therefore greatly hungreth and thirsteth after it, and so obtaines it For God is delighted to fill the hungrie with good things, & to send the rich empty away. [a] Theodore Beza saith, If thou finde not thine heart inwardly touched, pray that it may

Ib. fol. 300.

[a] Resp. ad. Acta Colloq Mompel.

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be touched: for then must thou know that this desire is a pledge of the fathers wil to thee. *Kemnitius saith: *Whē I haue a good desire, though it do scarcely shew it selfe in some little and slender sigh, I must be assured that the spirit of God is present: and worketh his good worke.* *Vrsinus* saith, *Faith in the most holy men in this life, is imperfect and weake. Yet neuertheless, whosoeuer feeles in his heart an earnest desire, and a striuing against his naturall doubtings, both can and must assure himselfe that hee is endued with true faith.* Againe, *Wicked men doe not desire the grace of the holy Spirit, whereby they may resist sinne. And therefore they are iustly depriued of it: for he that earnestly desireth the holy Ghost, hath*

[a] Locor. cõmun. 1.

Catechis.

hath it alreadie: becauſe this deſire of the ſpirit cannot be but from the ſpirit: as it is ſaide, *Bleſſed are they that hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſſe, for they ſhall be ſatisfied.* * Bradford ſaid, *Thy ſinnes are vndoubtedly pardoned, &c. for God hath giuen thee a penitent and beleeuing heart: that is, an heart which deſireth to repent and beleeue: for ſuch an one is taken of him (he accepting the will for the deede) for a penitent and beleeuing heart in deede.* a Taffine ſaith, *Our faith may be ſo ſmall and weake, as it doth not yet bring forth fruites that may be liuely felt of vs, but if they which feele themſelues in ſuch eſtate, deſire to haue theſe feelings (namely of Gods fauor and loue (if they aske*

*Epiſtle to Careleſſe.

a Booke of the markes of Gods children.

aske them at Gods hands by prayer: this desire and praier are testimonies that the Spirit of God is in them, and that they haue faith alreadie: for, is such a desire a fruit of the flesh or of the spirit? It is of the holy Spirit, who bringeth it forth onely in such as he dwels in, &c. Then these holy desires and praiers being the motions of the holy Ghost in vs, are testimonies of our faith, although they seeme to vs small and weake. As the woman that feeleth the mooning of a childe in her bodie, though very weake, assureth her selfe that she hath conceiued, and that shee goeth with a liue childe: So, if we haue these motions, these holy affections and desires before mentioned, let vs not doubt, but that we haue the holy Ghost (who is

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the author of them) dwelling in vs, and consequently that wee haue also faith. Againe, hee saith: First, *If thou hast begunne to hate and flie sinne.* 2. *If thou feelest that thou art displeased at thy infirmities and corruptions:* 3. *If hauing offended God thou feelest a griefe, and a sorrow for it:* 4. *If thou desire to abstaine:* 5. *If thou auoidest the occasions:* 6. *If thou trauellest to doe thy endeauour:* 7. *If thou prayest to God to giue thee grace: All these holie affections proceeding from none other then from the spirit of God, ought to bee so many pledges and testimonies, that hee is in thee.*

[a]Psal.6. [a]Maister Knoxe saith, *Albeit your paines sometimes be so horrible, that you finde no release nor comfort, neither in spi-*

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rit nor bodie, yet if thy heart can only ſobbe vnto God, deſpaire not, you ſhall obtaine your hearts deſire. And deſtitute you are not of faith: for at ſuch a time as the fleſh, naturall reaſon, the law of God, the preſent torment, the diuell at once doe crie, God is angry, and therefore, there is neither helpe nor remedy to be hoped for at his handes: at ſuch time I ſay, to ſobbe to God, is the demonſtration of the ſecret ſeede of God, which is hidden in God elect Children: and that only ſobbe, is vnto God a more acceptable ſacrifice, than without this croſſe, to giue our bodies to be burnt, euen for the Truthes ſake. More teſtimonies might be alleadged, but theſe ſhall ſuffice.

Againſt this point of Doctrine

ctrin, it may be alledged, that if desire to beleeue in our weakenesse be faith indeed; then some are iustified, and may be saued wanting a liuely apprehension and full perfection of Gods mercie in Christ. *Ans.* Iustifying faith in regard of his nature, is alwaies one and the same, and the essentiall property thereof, is, to apprehend Christ with his benefites, and to assure the verie conscience thereof. And therefore without some apprehension & assurance there can be no iustification or saluation in them that for age are able to beleeue. Yet there be certaine degrees and measures of true faith. There is a strong faith, which causeth a full apprehension

henſion and perſwaſion of Gods mercie in Chriſt. This meaſure of faith the Lord vouchſafed *Abraham*, *Dauid*, *Paul*, the Prophets, Apoſtles, and Martyrs of God. It were a bleſſed thing if all beleeuers might attaine vnto this height of liuely faith, to ſay with Paul, I am perſwaded, that neither life, nor death, nor any thing elſe ſhall bee able to ſeparate vs from the loue of God in Chriſt: but all cannot; therefore there is another degree of faith, lower then the former, and yet true faith, called a little or weake faith, and it alſo hath a power to apprehend and applie the promiſe of ſaluation, but as yet by reaſon of weaknes, it is infolded (as it were)

and

and wrapt vp in the heart, as the leafe and blossome in the bud. For such persons as haue this weake faith, can say indeed, that they beleeue their sinnes to be pardonable, and that seriously in their hearts they desire to haue them pardoned: but as yet they cannot say, that they are without all doubt pardoned. And yet the mercy of God is not wanting vnto them. For in that they doe, and can desire, and endeauor to apprehend, they doe indeed apprehend; God accepting the desire to doe the thing, for the thing done. This which I say will the better appeare, if the grounds thereof be considered. Faith doth not iustifie in respect of it selfe, because it is an acti-

bus on

on or vertue: or because it is strong, liuely, & perfect: but in respect of the obiect thereof, namely Christ crucified, whom faith apprehendeth, as hee is set forth vnto vs in the word & Sacraments. It is Christ that is the authour, and matter of our Iustice, and it is he that applieth the same vnto vs: as for faith in vs, it is but an instrument to apprehend and receiue that which Christ for his part offereth and giueth. Therefore, if Faith erre not in his proper obiect, but follow the promise of God, though it doe but weakely apprehend, or at the least cause a man onely to indeauour and desire to apprehēd, it is true faith and iustifieth. Though our apprehension

prehenſion be neceſſarie, yet our ſaluation ſtands rather in this, that God apprehends vs for his owne, then that wee apprehend him for ours. Phil. 3. v 12. And rather in this, that wee are knowne of him, then that we know him. Gal. 4. 9.

Out of this concluſion ſprings an other not to be omitted, that God accepts the indeauour of the whole man to obey, for perfect obedience it ſelfe.

That is, if men endeauour to pleaſe God in all things, God will not iudge their doings by the rigour of his law: but will accept their little & weake endeauour, to doe that which they can doe by his grace, as if they had perfectly fulfilled the law. But heere

here remember, I put this Caueat; that this endeuour muſt be in and by the whole man, the very minde, conſcience, will, and affections, doing that which they can in their kindes: and thus the endeauour to obey, which is a fruite of the ſpirit, ſhall be diſtinguiſhed frō ciuill righteouſneſſe, which may be in Heathen men, and is onely in the outward, and not in the inward man. The truth of the concluſion appeares by that which the Prophet *Malachie* ſaieth, that God will ſpare thē that feare him, as a Father ſpares his child: who accepts the thing done, as well done, if the child ſhew his good will to pleaſe his Father, and to doe what he can. Mal. 3. 17.

IIII. Conclusion.

To see and feele in our selues the want of any grace pertaining to Saluation, & to be grieued therefore: is the grace it selfe.

The Exposition.

VNderstand this conclusion as the former, namly that griefe of the hart for the want of any grace necessarie to saluation, is as much with God as the grace it selfe.

When being in distresse, we cannot pray as wee ought; God accepts the very groans, sobbes, and sighes of the perplexed heart, as the prayer it selfe: Rom. 8. 29. When we are grieued because we cānot be grieued for our sinnes, it is a degree and measure of god-

ly sorrow before God. Au-
guſtine ſaith well: *Sometimes*
our prayer is luke-warme, or ra-
ther cold and almoſt no prayer:
nay ſometime it is altogether no
prayer at all, and yet wee can
with griefe perceiue this in our
ſelues: for if wee can but griene
becauſe wee cannot pray, wee now
pray indeed. Hierome ſaith,
Then wee are iuſt when wee doe
acknowledge our ſelues to be ſin-
ners: Againe, *This is the true*
wiſedome of man, to know him-
ſelfe to be imperfect. And (that
I may ſo ſpeake) the perfection of
all iuſt men in the fleſh is imper-
fect: Auguſtine againe ſaith,
That the vertue which is now
in iuſt man: is thus farre forth
perfect, that vnto the perfecti-
on thereof, there belongs a true
acknowledgement, and an hum-

Com. 4. li. 1. ad Simplic. in fine.

Lib. 1. cõtra Pelagianos,

ble

ble confession of the imperfection thereof. A broken and contrite heart after an offence, is as much with GOD, as if there had beene no offence at all. And therfore so soone as *David* after his grieuous fall, in heauinesse of heart, confessed his sinne, saying in effect but thus much, *I haue sinned*, the Lord pronounceth the pardon of his sinne in heauen, and that presently.

V. Conclusion

He that hath begunne to subiect himselfe to Christ and his word, though as yet hee be ignorant in most points of religion, yet if he haue care to increase in knowledge, and to pro-

practise that which he knoweth, hee is accepted of God, as a true beleeuer.

The Exposition.

SVndrie persons by the Euangelists, are said to beleeue, which had onely seene the miracles of Christ, and as yet had made no further proceedings but to acknowledg Christ to be the Messias, and to submit themselues to him and his doctrine, which afterward should be taught. On this manner, the woman of Samaria beleeued, and many of the Samaritans vpon her report: & a certaine ruler, by reason of a miracle wrought vpon his sonne, is said to beleeue, and all his houshold. Iob. 4. 42. 52 When our Sa-

uiour Christ commẽded the faith of the Apostles, terming it a rocke, against which the gates of hell should not preuaile, it was not the plentifull knowledge of the doctrin of saluation: for they were ignorant of many articles of faith, as namely, of the death, resurrection, ascension, and kingdome of Christ; but because they beleeued him to be the sonne of God, & the Sauiour of mankinde, and they had withall resolued themselues to cleaue vnto him, and the blessed doctrine of saluation which hee taught, though as yet they were ignorant in many points. The holy Ghost comẽdeth the faith of *Rahab*, when shee receiued the spies: Now this her faith was

ndeed but a seede & begin-
ning of liuely faith: for then
hee had onely heard of the
miracles done in Egypt, and
of the deliuerance of the Is-
aelites, and was thereupon
mitten with feare, and had
conceiued a resolution with
erselfe, to ioyne herselfe to
he Israelites, and to worship
he true God. Now these and
he like, are termed belee-
ers, vpon iust cause: for
hough they be ignorant as
et, yet their ignorance shall
e no continuing or lasting
gnorance: and they haue ex-
ellent seedes of grace, name-
, a purpose of hart to cleaue
o Christ, and a care to profit
n the doctrine of saluation,
hereof they haue some lit-
e knowledge.

VI. Conclusion.

The foresaide beginnings of grace are counterfeit, vnlesse they increase.

The Exposition.

THe wickednesse of mans nature, and the depth of hypocrisie is such, that a man may & can easily transforme himselfe into the counterfeit & resemblance of any grace of GOD. Therefore I put downe in this last conclusion a certaine note, whereby the gifs of God may be discerned, namely, that they grow vp and increase, as the graine of Musterd-seede, to a great tree, and beare fruite answerably. The grace in the heart is like

like the graine of Musterd-seede in two things. First, it is small to see to, at the beginning: Secondly, after it is cast into the ground of the heart, it increaseth speedily, and spreades it selfe. Therfore, if a man at the first haue but some little feeling of his wants, some weake & faint desire, some small obedience, he must not let this sparke of grace goe out, but these motions of the spirit must be increased by the vse of ỹ word, Sacraments, and prayer: and they must daily be stirred vp by meditating, endeuouring, striuing, asking, seeking, knocking. The Maister deliuering his Talents to his seruants, saith vnto them, Occupie till I come, and not

hide in the earth, Math. 25. 16. Paul vseth an excellent speech to Timothie: I exhort thee to stirre vp the gift of God which is in thee: namely, as fire is stirred vp by often blowing, and putting to of wood: 2. Timoth. 1. 6. As for such motions of the heart that last for a weeke, or a moneth, and after vanish away, they are not to be regarded: & the Lord by the Prophet Osee complaineth of them, saying: O Ephraim, thy righteousnes is like the morning deaw. Chapt. 6.

Therfore cõsidering, that grace, vnlesse it be confirmed and exercised, is indeed no grace; I will here adde certaine rules of direction, that wee may the more easily put

inpractiſe the ſpirituall exercise of inuocation, faith, and repentance: and thereby alſo quicken & reuiue the ſeedes and beginnings of grace.

1 In what place ſo euer thou art, whether alone or abroad, by day or by night, & whatſoeuer thou art doing, ſet thy ſelfe in the preſence of God: let this perſwaſion alwaies take place in thy heart, that thou art before y liuing God: & do thy endeuor, that this perſwaſion may ſmite thy heart with awe and reuerence, and make thee afraide to ſinne. This counſell the Lord gaue *Abrahã*. Gen. 17. 1. *Walke before mee, & be vpright.* This things alſo was practiſed by *Enoch*, who for this cauſe is ſaid *to walke with God.*

2 Esteeme of euery present day, as of the day of thy death; and therefore liue as though thou were dying, and doe those good duties euery day that thou wouldest doe, if thou were dying. This is Christian watchfulnesse, and remember it.

3 Make Catalogues and billes of thine owne sinnes, especially of those sins that haue most dishonored God, and wounded thine own cõscience: set them before thee often, especially then, when thou hast any particular occasion of renewing thy repentance, that thy heart by this dolefull sight may be further humbled. This was Dauids practise, when hee considered his waies, and turned

turned his feet to Gods commandements, Psal. 119.57. And when he confessed the sinnes of his youth. Psal.25. This was Iobs practise, when he said he was not able to answer one of a thousand of his sinnes vnto God. Iob.9.1.

4 When thou first openest thine eies in a morning, pray to God, and giue him thankes heartily: God then shall haue his honor: & thy heart shall be the better for it the whole day following.

For wee see in experience, that vessels keepe long the taste of that liquor wherwith they are first seasoned. And whē thou lyest down, let that be ꝑ last also: for thou knowest not, whether thou being fallen asleepe, shalt euer rise

againe aliue. Good therefore it is, that thou ſhouldeſt giue vp thy ſelfe into the hands of God whilſt thou art waking.

5. Labour to ſee and feele thy ſpirituall pouerty, that is, to ſee the wãt of grace in thy ſelfe, eſpecially thoſe inward corruptions, of vnbeleefe, pride, ſelfe-loue, &c. Labour to be diſpleaſed with thy ſelf: and labour to feele, that by reaſon of them thou ſtandeſt in need of euery drop of the blood of Chriſt to heale and cleanſe the from theſe wants: and let this practiſe take ſuch place with thee, that if thou be demaunded what in thine eſtimation is the vileſt of the creatures vpon earth? thine heart and conſcience may anſwere with a loud voyce, I,

euen

euen I, by reason of mine owne sinnes: and againe, if thou be demaunded what is the best thing in the world for thee, thy hart and conscience may answer againe with a strong and loud crie, *One drop of the blood of Christ to wash away my sinnes.*

6 Shew thy selfe to be a member of Christ, and a seruant of God, not onely in the generall calling of a Christian, but also in the particular calling, in which thou art placed. It is nothing for a magistrate to be a Christiã man, but he must also be a Christian magistrat: it is not enough for a master of a family to be a Christian man or a Christiã in the church, but he must also be a Christiã in his family

and

& in the trade which he followeth daily. Not euery one that is a common hearer of the word, and a frequenter of the Lords table, is therefore a good Christian, vnlesse his conuersation in his priuate house, and in his priuate affaires and dealings be sutable; There, is a man to be seene what he is.

7 Search the Scriptures, to see what is sinne, and what is not sinne, in euery action: this done, carrie in thy heart a constant and resolute purpose, not to sin in any thing: for Faith and the purpose of sinning can neuer stand together.

8 Let thine endeuour be sutable to thy purpose: and therefore doe nothing at any time

time against thy conscience rightly enformed by the word: exercise thy selfe to eschew euery sin, & to obey god in euery one of his commandemẽts, that pertaine either to the generall calling of a Christian, or thy particular calling. Thus did good *Iosias*, who turned vnto God with all his heart, according *to all* the lawe of Moses. 1. King 23.25. and thus did Zacharie and Elizabeth, that walked *in all* the commandements of God without reproofe. Luke 1.6.

9 If at any time against thy purpose and resolution, thou be ouertaken with any sinne little or great, lie not in it, but speedily recouer thy selfe by repentance: humble

thy

thy ſelfe, confeſſing thine offence, and by prayer intreate the Lord to pardon the ſame, and that earneſtly, till ſuch time as thou findeſt thy conſcience truely pacified, & thy care to eſchue the ſame ſinne increaſed.

10 Conſider often of the right and proper end of thy life in this world, which is not to ſeeke profit, honour, pleaſure, but that in ſeruing of men, wee might ſerue God in our callings. God could, if it ſo pleaſed him, preſerue man without the miniſtery of mã but his pleaſure is to fulfil his worke and will in the preſeruation of our bodies, and ſaluation of our ſoules, by the imployment of men in his ſeruice, euery one according to his

his vocation. Neither is there ſo much as a bond-ſlaue, but he muſt in and by his faithful ſeruice to his maiſter, ſerue the Lord. Men therefore doe commonly profane their labours & liues, by ayming at a wrong end, when all their care conſiſteth onely in getting ſufficient maintenance for them and theirs, for the obtaining of credit, riches, & earnall comodities. For thus men ſerue themſelues, & not God, or men: much leſſe doe they ſerue God in ſeruing of men.

11. Giue all diligence to make thy election ſure, and to gather manifold tokens thereof. For this cauſe obſerue the workes of Gods prouidence, loue, and mercy, both

both in thee and vpon thee, from time to time: for the ſerious conſideration of them, and the laying of them together, whē they are many and ſeueral, miniſter much direction, aſſuráce of Gods fauour and comfort. This was the practiſe of Dauid, 1. Sam. 17 34. Pſal. 25. all.

12 Thinke euermore thy preſent eſtate whatſoeuer it bee, to be the beſt eſtate for thee: becauſe whatſoeuer befals thee, though it be ſickneſs, or any other afflictió, or death, befals thee of the good prouidence of God. That this may the better be done, labour to ſee & acknowledge the prouidence of God, as well in pouertie as in abundáce; as well in diſgrace as in good

good report, as well in ſickneſſe as in health, as well in life as in death.

13 Pray continually, I meane, not by ſolemne and ſet prayer, but by ſecret and inward eiaculations of the heart, that is, by a continuall eleuation of thy minde vnto Chriſt, ſitting at the right hand of God the Father, and that either by praier or giuing of thankes ſo often as any occaſion ſhall be offered.

14 Thinke often of the worſt and moſt grieuous things that may befall thee, either in this life or death for the name of Chriſt: make a reckoning of them, and prepare thy ſelfe to beare them: that when they come, they may not ſeeme ſtrãge, but be

borne

borne the more easily.

15 Make conscience of idle, vaine, vnhonest, and vngodly thoughts: for these are the seedes & beginnings of actuall sin in word and in deede. This want of care in ordering and composing of out thoughts, is often punished with a fearefull temptation in the very thought, called of Diuines, *Tentatio blasphemiarum*, a tentation of blasphemies.

16 When any good motion or affection riseth in the heart, suffer it not to passe away, but feede it by reading, meditating, praying.

17 Whatsoeuer good thing thou goest about, whether it be in word or deede, do it not in conceit of thy selfe,

or in the pride of thy heart, but in humility ascribing the power whereby thou doest thy worke, and the praise thereof to God: otherwise thou shalt finde by experience God will curse thy best doings.

18 Despise not ciuill honestie: good conscience and good manners must go together: therefore remember to make conscience of lying, and of customable swearing, in common talke: contend not either in deede or word with any man, bee curteous and gentle to all, good and bad: beare with mens wants and frailties, as hastinesse, frowardnesse, selfe-liking, curiousnesse, &c. passing by them as beeing not perceiued:

ued: returne not euil for euil, but rather good for euill: vse meate, drinke, & apparell, in that manner & measure, that they may further godlinesse; and may be as it were signes, in which thou maiest expresse the hidden grace of thy heart: Striue not to goe beyond any, vnlesse it be in good things: go before thine equals in giuing of honour, rather then in taking of it: make cõscience of thy word, and let it be as a bond: professe no more outwardly then thou hast inwardly in heart: oppresse or defraud no man in bargaining: in all companies, either doe good, or take good.

19 Cleaue not by inordinate affection to any crea-

ture,

ture, but aboue al things quiet & rest thy mind in Christ, aboue all dignity & honour, aboue all cunning & policy, aboue all glory and honour, aboue all health and beauty, aboue all wealth and treasure, aboue all ioy & delight, aboue all fame and praise, aboue all mirth and consolation, that mans heart can feele or deuise beside Christ.

With these rules of practise, ioyne rules of meditation; whereof I propound sixe vnto thee, as I finde them set downe by a learned Diuine, called *Victorinus Strigelius*.

I.

VVe must not fall away from God for any creature.

II.

Infinite eternity is farre to be

be preferred before the short race of this mortall life.

III.

VVee must hold fast the promise of grace, though we lose all temporall blessings; and they also in death must needs be left.

IIII.

Let the loue of God in Christ, and the loue of the Church for Christ, be strong in thee, and preuaile against all other affections.

V.

It is the principall art of a Christian, to beleeue things inuisible, to hope for things deferred, to loue God when hee shewes him to bee an enemie, and thus to perseuere vnto the end.

VI.

VI.

It is a most effectuall remedy for any griefe, to quiet ourselues in a confidence of the presence and helpe of God: and to aske him, and withall to waite, either for some easement or deliuerance.

VII.

All the workes of God are done in contrarie meanes.

FINIS.

VI.

It is a most effectuall remedy for any griefe, to quiet our
selues in a confidence of the
presence and helpe of God:
and to aske him, and with-
all to waite, either for reme-
dy or deliuerance.

VII.

All the workes of God are
done in contrarie meanes.

FINIS.

TWO TREATISES.

1. Of the Nature and Practise of Repentance.

2. Of the Combate of the Flesh and Spirit.

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